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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraphs 50 and 52 of Security Council resolution 2277 (2016). It covers major developments that have occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since my report of 28 June 2016 (S/2016/579) and progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and provides an update on the degree of preparedness of MONUSCO with regard to addressing security risks and monitoring and reporting on human rights violations and abuses in the context of the upcoming elections.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. The national dialogue proposed by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, commenced on 1 September. The period leading up to the beginning of the dialogue was marked by continued tensions between the ruling coalition and significant segments of the opposition and civil society over the national dialogue and the electoral process. Divisions among and within political parties persisted, albeit with some nuances on the modalities and objectives of, and prerequisites for, the national dialogue. The issue of the facilitation of the dialogue remained divisive, with some opposition leaders rejecting the appointment by the African Union Commission of the former Prime Minister of Togo, Edem Kodjo, as the African Union Facilitator of the national dialogue and calling for a greater role for international partners in the facilitation.

3. On 29 June, on the eve of the celebration of the fifty-sixth anniversary of the independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the President delivered an address to the nation, rejecting incessant foreign interference in the internal affairs of the country, urging the Facilitator to finalize consultations and launch the national dialogue as soon as possible and calling upon the population to participate in the upcoming voter registration process. On the same day, he promulgated the

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amendment to the electoral law governing the voter registration process, which provides for the enrolment of those who have attained the legal age to vote since the holding of the general elections in 2011 and Congolese voters living abroad.

4. The polarized debate over respect for constitutional provisions continued. On 30 June, the leader of the opposition party Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social and the opposition coalition the Rassemblement des forces politiques et sociales acquises au changement, Etienne Tshisekedi, issued a statement stressing the need for presidential elections to be held within the constitutional time frame. On 6 July in Brussels, Mr. Tshisekedi and the presidential candidate Moïse Katumbi reportedly stated that the President should step down at the end of his term on 19 December in accordance with the Constitution. On 11 July, in remarks to the press, the Secretary-General of the ruling party Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie, Henri Mova, noted that there would be no transitional government after 19 December, given that the 11 May ruling of the Constitutional Court provided that, should elections be postponed, the President has legal grounds to remain in office until the assumption of duties of the President-elect. He indicated that the question of a third presidential term could be put before the people.

5. Both the ruling coalition and opposition platforms held political rallies to mobilize popular support for their positions regarding the national dialogue and the electoral process in Kinshasa and other cities. On 27 July, Mr. Tshisekedi returned to Kinshasa after a two-year absence for health reasons. He was welcomed by a significant number of supporters, estimated at 10,000 people.

6. On 29 July, the Majorité présidentielle organized a meeting attended by an estimated 65,000 supporters, calling for participation in the voter registration process and the national dialogue proposed by the President. The Secretary-General of the Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie and the Speaker of the National Assembly, Aubin Minaku, reiterated the importance of the national dialogue for peaceful elections.

7. On 31 July, a rally of the Rassemblement opposition platform took place in Kinshasa without incident and brought together supporters whose numbers were estimated at several tens of thousands of people. In his speech, the President of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social urged the National Independent Electoral Commission to announce, on 19 September, the organization of presidential and legislative elections to be held in November. He added that the Head of State would be guilty of high treason should he stay in office beyond the end of his second and final term in office, which ends on 19 December, and called for the release of all political prisoners as a precondition for participation in the dialogue.

8. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region engaged with a wide range of stakeholders in an effort to help to ease tensions and to create conditions conducive to the holding of an inclusive and credible national dialogue in support of the efforts of the Facilitator. Their engagement was part of the efforts of the support group to the African Union Facilitator, which was established on 4 July. The support group comprises my Special Envoy and my Special Representative, as well as representatives of the European Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the

International Organization of la Francophonie and the Southern African Development Community. The support group held meetings in Kinshasa on 23 July and 4 August and carried out extensive consultations with Congolese stakeholders in Kinshasa from 2 to 5 August to support the launching of the national dialogue, in line with Security Council resolution 2277 (2016).

9. Following the presidential pardon of a number of prisoners on 22 July, the support group issued a communiqué on 23 July reiterating the importance of launching the national dialogue by the end of July and urging all Congolese stakeholders to take part in a dialogue within the framework of the Constitution, relevant legal instruments of the African Union and resolution 2277 (2016). It also endorsed launching the dialogue process on 26 July and the work of the preparatory committee on 30 July. At a press conference on 23 July in Kinshasa, the Facilitator announced that the work of the preparatory committee of the dialogue would commence on 30 July. On 24 July, the leader of the opposition coalition Rassemblement issued a statement rejecting the communiqué of the support group and recusing the Facilitator. The Rassemblement argued that its preconditions of the unconditional release of all political prisoners and the transformation of the support group into a group of facilitators had not been met. On 25 July, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Aubin Minaku, and the Spokesperson of the ruling Majorité présidentielle, André Atundu, rejected the statement and reaffirmed their support for the Facilitator. The African Union Commission Chairperson and the support group reaffirmed their support to the Facilitator on 26 July and 4 August, respectively.

10. Following démarches by the Facilitator, my Special Representative and my Special Envoy encouraged the Government to create an environment conducive to the holding of an inclusive dialogue, presidential pardons were granted to activists and human rights defenders, nine of whom were released from prison. Six members of the activist movements Filimbi and the Lutte pour le changement were among those released. Two media outlets affiliated with opposition leaders of the Mouvement de libération du Congo and the Union pour la nation congolaise were also reopened.

11. From 23 to 27 August, the preparatory committee held meetings and completed its work, which defined the agenda, venue and participants for the national dialogue and validated the road map of the national dialogue and the representation quota for each category of political stakeholder. Whereas some individual political parties and civil society organizations took part in the process, the opposition platforms Dynamique de l'opposition and Rassemblement boycotted the meetings. On 29 August in Kinshasa, Mr. Tshisekedi issued a communiqué on behalf of the Rassemblement calling upon the population to reject any outcome from the "pseudo-dialogue contravening the Sun City Agreement and the Constitution" and to take part in peaceful protests beginning 1 September. The communiqué also called upon the Congolese people to stage sit-in demonstrations on 19 September to call for the immediate announcement of the holding of presidential elections in November.

12. The question of participation in the national dialogue created some fissures within opposition coalitions. Divisions within the Dynamique de l'opposition platform emerged over participation in the dialogue process. Its initial hesitation notwithstanding, the Mouvement de libération du Congo eventually aligned itself

with the position of the Rassemblement, although some party representatives in the National Assembly decided to participate in the preparatory committee. The Union pour la nation congolaise decided to join the dialogue process and was subsequently expelled from the Dynamique de l'opposition. The Secretary-General of the Union pour la nation congolaise, Jean-Bertrand Ewanga, and its Deputy Secretary-General, Claudel-André Lubaya, resigned from their positions in protest of the decision of the party leader, Vital Kamerhe, to join the process. They were expelled from the party by its leadership on 3 September.

13. Divisions also surfaced within the leadership of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, with the party leader Mr. Tshisekedi removing Bruno Mavungu as its Secretary-General on 11 August owing to a divergence of views with regard to the national dialogue. On 12 August, Mr. Mavungu announced that he had created a new party, the Union des démocrates pour la renaissance du Congo, whereas some members of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social et alliés parliamentary group in the National Assembly decided to take part in the dialogue process. On 29 August, a group of five political parties decided to leave the Rassemblement in protest of what they regarded as the undue influence of "so-called new opposition members", by which they meant the Groupe des sept, on Mr. Tshisekedi and the positions of the Rassemblement with regard to the national dialogue process. The dissident group formed the Front national coalition and announced that it would participate in the national dialogue.

14. Against this background of political tensions and posturing, the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo supported the efforts of the Facilitator by engaging a number of Congolese stakeholders to broaden participation in the dialogue. The President of the Republic of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, held several meetings in Brazzaville with stakeholders from across the political spectrum of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Facilitator in an effort to support a more inclusive dialogue. On 2 September, the President visited Kinshasa and held consultations with the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, members of the Rassemblement, my Special Representative and some members of the diplomatic corps. My Special Representative and my Special Envoy were in contact with the President of the Republic of the Congo to coordinate efforts aimed at making the dialogue process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo more inclusive and credible.

15. On 17 September, the National Independent Electoral Commission submitted to the Constitutional Court a request to postpone the elections, given that it was not in a position to announce the holding of presidential and legislative elections for November as envisaged in the Constitution.

16. On 19 September, opposition supporters held demonstrations in several cities across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following calls by the Rassemblement for the holding of elections in November and demanding that the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo step down by 19 December. Demonstrations in Kinshasa deteriorated into violence, with the police firing live ammunition and tear gas at demonstrators who reportedly tried to divert from the agreed itinerary and pelted stones at the police. The headquarters of several political parties affiliated with the Majorité présidentielle, including a local headquarters of the Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie, the President's party,

were set ablaze. According to investigations conducted by MONUSCO, at least 49 people, including at least one police officer, were killed and 127 people were injured, while security forces arrested approximately 299 demonstrators, journalists and human rights defenders across the country. On 20 September in Kinshasa, the headquarters of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, the Mouvement de libération du Congo and the Forces novatrices pour l'union et la solidarité were attacked. Three people were killed and six were wounded when the headquarters of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social was set ablaze. Two government buildings were also reportedly vandalized and set ablaze.

17. The same day, France, the United States of America, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations issued statements calling upon the security forces to exercise maximum restraint, stressing the need for the Government to ensure respect for fundamental human rights and urging political leaders tc resolve their differences through dialogue and other peaceful means. MONUSCO engaged the authorities to stress the need to avoid the excessive use of force by the police and urge for the de-escalation of tensions. The Mission conducted day and night patrols to monitor the security and human rights situation.

18. In the light of the violent incidents in Kinshasa, on 19 September, the Facilitator suspended the talks at the national dialogue. On 20 September, the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo suspended its participation in the dialogue process, arguing that the prevailing circumstances were not conducive to dialogue. Delegates of the opposition also suspended their participation, citing similar reasons. On 23 September, the dialogue resumed briefly, with the participation of opposition leader Mr. Kamerhe. The Facilitator shared a draft agreement with participants. Talks at the dialogue remained suspended as at 29 September.

19. During the reporting period, the President undertook visits to several provinces, including Haut-Katanga, Maniema, North Kivu, Tanganyika and Tshopo. Whereas the visits to Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga, Kalemie, Tanganyika, Kindu, Maniema, and Kisangani, Tshopo, served to mobilize support for the national dialogue and the voter registration processes, the visits to Beni, Buleusa, Butembo, Miriki, Goma and Rutshuru, North Kivu, aimed at addressing issues of insecurity and demonstrating the commitment of the Government to that end.

B. Electoral developments

20. The calendar for the voter registration process was on the agenda of the national dialogue, and progress was made with regard to the review of the legislative framework for the process and the preparations for the revision of the voter register. On 4 August, the President publicly stated that the revised electoral calendar would only be published upon completion of the voter registration process, a statement which led to criticism by the political opposition. According to the National Independent Electoral Commission, the voter registration process would last 16 months. The Dynamique de l'opposition and the Rassemblement issued statements, warning the Commission of the political risks relating to the postponement of elections beyond the constitutionally mandated deadlines.

21. On 31 July, the National Independent Electoral Commission launched the pilot phase of the voter registration process in Gbadolite, North Ubangi province, which is expected to be completed by late October. As at 30 August, nearly 120,000 voters had registered in 365 of 412 registration centres. The target set by the Commission is the registration of some 850,000 voters in the province. MONUSCO provided technical and logistical assistance during the pilot phase, including airlifting electoral materials and providing warehouse space. MONUSCO finalized its plan for supporting the revision of the voter register, which envisages the provision of technical assistance and logistical support for the distribution of nearly 22,000 registration kits to 16 hubs, 107 antennas of the Commission and 18,000 registration centres.

22. By 15 July, the Government had disbursed $120 million of the total $300 million pledged for 2016 to the National Independent Electoral Commission in support of preparations for the elections. The multi-partner basket fund for the Projet d'appui au cycle électoral au Congo, managed by the United Nations Development Programme, remained funded at only around 6 per cent of a budget of $123.3 million required to support the electoral process.

C. Security situation

23. Armed violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to place civilians at risk, resulting in an increase in population displacement and insecurity. Joint MONUSCO-Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) operations contributed to containing the violence, while cooperation with FARDC improved.

24. In Beni territory, North Kivu, recurring attacks against civilians were carried out by elements presumed to be members of the Allied Democratic Forces. On 5 July, unidentified armed elements believed to be members of that group, killed nine civilians in Tenambo village. FARDC troops launched an operation to engage the assailants, with the support of MONUSCO, reportedly killing eight of them. Clashes have continued between the armed forces and presumed Allied Democratic Forces elements, the latter at times dressed in FARDC uniforms, especially in the vicinity of the former stronghold of the group, known as the "triangle", in the Abyalose area and near Mayi-Moya. On 30 July, FARDC, with MONUSCO support, clashed with suspected Allied Democratic Forces elements east of Oicha. Two FARDC soldiers were killed and another two were wounded, and one MONUSCO peacekeeper was slightly injured. Three presumed elements of that group were killed and two were captured by FARDC. On 8 August, FARDC launched a coordinated operation with MONUSCO against the Allied Democratic Forces in the triangle area in Abyalose, during which five FARDC and one MONUSCO peacekeeper were injured. During the operation, one main camp of the group was captured and occupied by FARDC on 13 August. A MONUSCO helicopter was hit by three bullets while attempting a medical evacuation in the area but managed to land safely. MONUSCO was directly targeted, including on 4 August, when suspected Allied Democratic Forces elements fired a rocket-propelled grenade round towards the MONUSCO base in Semliki. As a result of the sustained pressure from the operations, Allied Democratic Forces elements continued to move north, including into Ituri province.

25. The most serious security incident took place on 13 August, when presumed Allied Democratic Forces elements massacred at least 50 civilians, including 15 women and 2 children, in the Rwangoma and Beni areas, on the border with Virunga National Park. The assailants, disguised as park rangers, established a barrier at the entrance of the park, near Paida, where they detained, tied up and killed farmers returning to their homes. The assailants then proceeded towards Rwangoma, torching houses along the way and killing more civilians. FARDC and MONUSCO reinforced their positions in the Beni and Rwangoma areas the next day. A MONUSCO verification patrol was denied access to the site of the killings by an angry crowd protesting against what it considered to be inaction by MONUSCO. On 15 August, a senior MONUSCO team travelled to Rwangoma to assess the situation, followed on 16 August by a multidisciplinary team to review the response of the Mission. A high-level government delegation led by the Prime Minister, Augustin Matata Ponyo, visited Goma and Beni on 15 and 16 August to assess the situation and review the response of the national security forces to the threat of the Allied Democratic Forces. A meeting of the National Defence Council was held in Goma on 16 August. The FARDC hierarchy restructured the command of Operation Sukola I to improve the effectiveness of operations against the Allied Democratic Forces.

26. The massacres attributed to the Allied Democratic Forces sparked criticism from civil society and the political opposition against the Government and MONUSCO, which were accused of not doing enough to protect civilians. The killings also prompted popular protest. Youth and civil society groups rallied over 2,000 protestors, who staged demonstrations against the perceived lack of action from FARDC and MONUSCO and, on 17 August, marched from Butembo to Beni, where they clashed with police. At least two civilians and one police officer were killed, several civilians were shot and wounded by the police and at least 10 houses were burned down by the protesters. Authorities arrested at least 100 protestors, who were later released. The attacks triggered incidents of popular revenge but also retaliation by FARDC against civilians perceived to be collaborating with the assailants. Two women were burned alive by an angry crowd in Butembo, and six civilians were abducted and killed by FARDC in the Rwenzori area.

27. The Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda and allied elements remain a serious threat to civilians in North Kivu, notwithstanding the ongoing FARDC-led Operation Sukola II to neutralize them. Deepening tensions were reported within the group, with a split in the command structure following the creation of the Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie, led by a former commander of the group, Wilson Irategeka. The split also led to violent confrontations between the two sides on 29 and 30 July around Bibwe, northwest of Kitshanga, in Rutshuru territory.

28. Inter-communal tensions remain an increasing source of violence in North Kivu. The continuing activity of the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda, the growing presence of opposing Mayi-Mayi groups and fighting among various groups along ethnic lines fuelled the situation, contributing to an overall deterioration of the security situation and further displacement of the population. The violence mainly shifted from Walikale and Masisi territories into Rutshuru and Lubero territories, reflecting the deepening intercommunal conflict among the Hunde,

Hutu and Nande populations. From 3 to 8 August, in the area of Kiribizi, near Nyanzalé, in Rutshuru territory, North Kivu, attacks by Mayi-Mayi groups (mainly Mayi-Mayi Mazembé and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura) and the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda on the civilian population along ethnic lines reportedly resulted in the death of five Hutu, two Hundé and 11 Nande civilians, the torching of more than 90 houses and the displacement of some 8.000 civilians, 300 of whom sought refuge in the area near a MONUSCO base in Rwindi.

29. The activities of Mayi-Mayi groups involved in illegal poaching activities and the exploitation of natural resources and the continuing trend of kidnapping for ransom by Mayi-Mayi and suspected Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda elements continued to drive insecurity in Rutshuru territory. On 13 and 14 July, in response to cooperation between Congolese security forces and MONUSCO that aimed at preventing illegal activities in Virunga National Park, Mayi-Mayi Charles elements fired at MONUSCO helicopters and burned down a FARDC post near the park.

30. In South Kivu, FARDC continued operations against Mayi-Mayi Raiya Mutomboki and other Mayi-Mayi groups in Fizi, Mwenga, Shabunda and Uvira territories. In Fizi territory, the combination of Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda activities and direct clashes between FARDC and armed elements crossing over from Burundi posed a particular threat to civilians. Although FARDC reported some progress against the major Mayi-Mayi groups during the reporting period, it has thus far not resulted in any significant disarmament. Illegal mining in Shabunda territory remains a source of instability owing to the involvement of armed groups operating in the area.

31. In Ituri province, elements of the Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri continued to attack civilians and loot villages, with a total of 47 attacks against the population occurring during the month of July alone. FARDC operations against the group, with support from MONUSCO, resulted in the dismantling of 11 Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri camps. In Mambasa territory, Hutu and Nande population movements from North Kivu, driven partially by the ongoing violence in Beni territory, fuelled inter-ethnic tensions. A new Mayi-Mayi coalition, the Union des patriotes pour la libération du Congo, was created and targeted isolated FARDC posts. In that context, the sporadic return of former combatants from Kamina and Kitona national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps to Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, without adequate support for community reintegration, presents serious security risks owing to the likelihood of re-recruitment by the Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri and other groups.

32. In Bas-Uélé and Haut-Uélé, the Lord's Resistance Army was increasingly active owing to the continued infiltration of elements of the group from South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The increased presence of the Lord's Resistance Army in that area is in part owing to ongoing military pressure by the African Union regional task force within the framework of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army in neighbouring countries. The Lord's Resistance Army continued to ambush and harass civilians along the two key axes of Dungu and Niangara territories and in Ango territory. The group released 18 abductees in Ango territory, and another one managed to escape. MONUSCO repatriated seven dependants of members of the

group to Uganda and South Sudan and handed over eight others to the International Committee of the Red Cross for tracing and repatriation.

33. On 15 August, the Mission was alerted to the presence of former first Vice-President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, inside the Garamba National Park in Haut-Uélé province, along with several hundred armed elements and some civilians. At the request of the Government, on humanitarian grounds, the Mission coordinated the extraction of Mr. Machar, his wife and his son, as well as 10 other individuals. Since then, MONUSCO has evacuated from the park some 755 elements of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition who were considered to be in critical condition with regard to their health and has collected 134 weapons and ammunition. The Mission has handed over 117 individuals, including Mr. Machar, to the Congolese authorities. As at 20 September, a total of 633 individuals remained in MONUSCO facilities.

34. In Tanganyika province, there was a surge in Mayi-Mayi Kata Katanga activity and a significant shift in targeting of security forces and intensity of the attacks. At least 10 incidents were reported in July and 4 in August, including attacks against national police stations and FARDC posts during which six Mayi-Mayi were killed and six were captured and four civilians, one local chief and one national police officer were killed. There were also reports of a large number of children being recruited into the group on 31 July in Kyalwa village.

D. Protection of civilians and neutralization of armed groups

35. Cooperation with FARDC continued to improve following instructions by the FARDC hierarchy to the armed forces to cooperate with MONUSCO in order to work towards neutralizing all armed groups by December 2016.

36. MONUSCO increased its focus on the protection of civilians, in particular in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, pursuing efforts to neutralize the main armed groups through a renewed emphasis on political action, enhanced analysis and targeted political and military strategies. The Mission carried out day and night patrols and joint assessment missions, as well as visits of joint protection teams to areas of concern in Bas-Uélé, Haut-Uélé, Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. MONUSCO intensified its efforts with regard to community liaison activities and early warning reporting by reinforcing analytical capacity, harnessing social media technologies and establishing two toll-free telephone lines for civilian alerts in the areas most affected by the activities of the Allied Democratic Forces. The Community Alert Network system transmitted an average of 225 early warning alerts per month, which represents an 18 per cent increase from the previous reporting period mainly owing to the increase in armed group activities and the ongoing military operations against the Allied Democratic Forces and the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda. The Government and/or MONUSCO responded to nearly 90 per cent of the alerts. Those alerts not responded to were regarding areas with limited State capacity and/or no MONUSCO presence.

37. In the Beni area, North Kivu, the Mission continued to reinforce its analytical capacity through better integration among civilians and military and police personnel, which resulted in improved protection responses. This allowed for more

rapid MONUSCO reaction in support of FARDC to repel attempted attacks by suspected Allied Democratic Forces elements. On 30 July, a civilian alert from Oicha village prompted immediate action from FARDC, which quickly deployed to the area. MONUSCO provided support to the FARDC-led Usalama Operation in the Eringeti area in early August, with a view to dislodging the Allied Democratic Forces from key positions, including the group's camp "Garlic", and replacing them with an enduring FARDC protective presence. The Mission instituted new tactics, emphasizing the use of foot patrols to ensure better situational awareness and to provide a more frequent, visible presence in areas where civilians are at risk. Challenges persist, however, in terms of geographical coverage, mobility and information flow, resulting in limitations on the capacity of MONUSCO and the national security forces to reduce violence, instability, human rights violations and population displacement in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the integrated strategy for the fight against urban insecurity in Beni was extended to include Oicha and subsequently replicated in Goma, Bunia and Uvira.

38. MONUSCO applied several measures to protect civilians and reduce the threat posed by the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda in North Kivu and South Kivu, including through support to Operation Sukola II. Specifically, MONUSCO directly supported FARDC operations against elements of the armed group in Rutshuru territory, with the involvement of MONUSCO troops in Kanyabayonga and Nyanzale. In late June, MONUSCO provided air and ground support to operations against Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda positions in North Kivu. In addition, following the killing of nine civilians in Kibirizi in August, MONUSCO deployed temporarily to key areas to secure the civilian population.

39. In the context of rising inter-ethnic tensions, MONUSCO facilitated a number of high-level visits in the Buleusa area, including by the Head of State and the Minister of the Interior, following violence against internally displaced members of the Hutu community. This resulted in a reconciliation ceremony on 23 July. Efforts are ongoing to develop a comprehensive strategy with the humanitarian community to address key drivers of the conflict.

40. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to support MONUSCO in the protection of civilians and its stabilization efforts through the destruction of 5,645 explosive remnants of war, 470 weapons and 21,608 rounds of small arms ammunition. The Service provided infrastructure for safe weapons storage, technical advice and weapons and ammunition management training to national police in Bukavu, South Kivu, and Bunia, Ituri.

E. Disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration

41. Efforts under the Programme national de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration III focused on returning former combatants to their communities, although with little preparation. Following the 15 June violence in the Kamina reinsertion camp, between late June and 23 July, the Government transferred 688 ex-combatants and their dependants from Kamina and Kitona reinsertion camps to communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. MONUSCO closely

monitored the return of ex-combatants with a view to minimizing the negative security impacts of this return. Tensions remain high among the 3,591 ex-combatants and their 559 dependants who remain in the two reinsertion camps, awaiting return to their communities.

42. Surrenders by elements of foreign armed groups, in particular the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda, have remained at a relatively constant level since the previous reporting period. Since 29 June, 36 foreign combatants (31 Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda, 2 Lord's Resistance Army and 3 Nyatura), 2 children associated with armed groups and 64 dependents were repatriated. The recent split within the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda seems not to have resulted in a surge in surrenders as it has largely served to strengthen the resolve of the remaining hard-core elements to stay and fight. Since 29 June, MONUSCO processed 37 Congolese combatants (6 Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda, 23 Nyatura and 8 Mayi-Mayi), 63 children associated with armed groups and 17 dependants.

43. MONUSCO continued to provide life support assistance to 1,322 Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda combatants and their dependants in transit camps at Kanyabayonga, North Kivu, and Walungu, South Kivu, as well as in the Government-run camp at Kisangani, Tshopo.

F. Consolidation of State authority and stabilization

44. MONUSCO pursued efforts to assist the Government through the implementation of provincial stabilization strategies and action plans, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund and the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The establishment of governance mechanisms within the framework of the Stabilization Coherence Fund was evidence of the Government's continued engagement with the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, along with international partners and the United Nations. On 18 July, the South Kivu Trust Fund Board approved the stabilization programme for the Rusizi plains, Uvira territory. The provincial trust fund boards in North Kivu and South Kivu became operational, and the Ituri Trust Fund Board was established on 10 August. On 2 August, the Ministry of Planning approved the manual of operations for the Stabilization Coherence Fund, thus creating a basis for the transparent management of funds and the protection of donor investments.

45. On 8 August, MONUSCO established a working group to provide advisory and technical support to the Government in establishing a prison warden system, as envisaged in the national justice reform, and training a specialized police unit to ensure prison security for a three-year period. The Mission developed an action plan for the operationalization of the national interministerial body set up to establish a specialized prison police corps to address the rampant escapes and ensure safe custody of offenders.

G. Human rights situation

46. From 1 July to 31 August, MONUSCO registered 776 allegations of human rights violations. State agents were responsible for 480 allegations of human rights violations, resulting in the death of 51 civilians. Armed groups were responsible for 296 allegations of human rights violations, with 178 civilian deaths. MONUSCO documented 135 allegations of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms linked to the restriction of the democratic space throughout the country, bringing the total to at least 563 violations since January 2016, which represents an increase of more than double compared with the 2015 statistics. During his first visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 18 to 21 July 2016, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights echoed the concerns regarding the increasing trend towards the restriction of political space, while also noting the situation of political prisoners, the excessive use of force by the national police and the manipulation of justice, in particular in cases involving opposition leaders and civil society representatives. An increase in the targeting of human rights advocates was also noted during the reporting period.

47. No major incident was registered during the 27 July opposition demonstrations on the occasion of the return to Kinshasa of Mr. Tshisekedi. At least 18 supporters of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, however, were arrested and subsequently released during similar events organized in other cities in the country.

48. MONUSCO continued to assist military justice authorities in carrying out investigations and prosecutions relating to serious crimes allegedly perpetrated by FARDC, the Police nationale congolaise and armed groups. During the period under review, in Gety, Ituri, MONUSCO provided support to mobile court hearings against 14 FARDC elements allegedly involved in human rights violations committed in 2013 and 2014 during military operations against the Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri. MONUSCO also provided assistance to military justice authorities during two missions in Beni territory, North Kivu, aimed at investigating reports of human rights violations committed by suspected Allied Democratic Forces elements.

49. On 15 July, the Tribunal de grande instance in Buta, Bas-Uélé, resumed criminal hearings that had been pending for more than three years owing to an insufficient number of judges in the province. The Mission deployed advocacy efforts resulting in the nomination of two judges and provided support to the deployment of the President of the Tribunal from Kinshasa to Kisangani. In July, MONUSCO organized a series of capacity-building activities on arrest and detention for 124 judicial police officers, magistrates, lawyers and judges in Tanganyika and Tshopo provinces.

H. Sexual violence

50. Forty-three women, including 24 girls, were reported as victims of conflict-related sexual violence. State actors were responsible for 44 per cent of those abuses and armed groups for 56 per cent. FARDC soldiers reportedly accounted for 40 per cent of the violations, whereas elements of the Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri, Mayi-Mayi Nyatura and Mayi-Mayi Raiya Mutomboki were allegedly responsible for 33 per cent, 9 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively.

51. MONUSCO assisted the FARDC Commission on the Fight against Sexual Violence with the dissemination and implementation of the FARDC action plan in Bas-Uélé, Haut-Uélé, Ituri, Maniema, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tshopo. Between 19 July and 11 August, MONUSCO supported the Commission in organizing four sensitization sessions on sexual violence targeting FARDC commanders from the third defence zone. A total of 200 FARDC commanders signed commitments to apply a policy of zero tolerance of sexual violence in their ranks, committing to take specific steps to prevent and respond to crimes of sexual violence in accordance with the FARDC action plan and the joint communiqué on the fight against sexual violence signed by the United Nations and the Government in March 2013.

I. Child protection

52. MONUSCO documented 155 grave violations of children's rights, which is a decrease compared with the previous reporting period, during which 589 cases were registered. A total of 115 children (104 boys and 11 girls) were separated or escaped from armed groups, compared with 495 children documented in the last reporting period. The main armed groups recruiting children were the Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (50 children), Mayi-Mayi Nyatura (16 children), the Union des patriotes pour la défence des innocents (10 children), the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes Abacunguzi (9 children), Mayi-Mayi Yira (8 children) and Mayi-Mayi Raiya Mutomboki (6 children). Ten children formerly associated with armed groups were released from FARDC custody in North Kivu (8 children) and South Kivu (2 children).

53. The Bukavu military tribunal sentenced a member of the child protection unit of the Police nationale congolaise to ten years' imprisonment for raping an eight-year-old girl.

J. Humanitarian situation

54. The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo owing to armed group activity and increasing intercommunal violence. The estimated number of people in need of humanitarian assistance remained at 7.5 million, including some 1.7 million internally displaced persons. Nearly 367,000 people were newly displaced in the first half of 2016, 38 per cent of which were in North Kivu. As at 31 July, there were some 388,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the country, including approximately 245,000 from Rwanda, 95,000 from the Central African Republic, 30,000 from Burundi and 15,700 from South Sudan.

55. Insecurity remained a major obstacle to humanitarian access in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and continued to impact the delivery of assistance to people in need. There were reports of several ambushes of vehicles belonging to non-governmental organizations and kidnappings by armed groups. The number of incidents against humanitarian workers has increased by 16 per cent since 2015.

56. As at 31 August 2016, the Humanitarian Response Plan of $690 million remained funded at 43 per cent, amounting to a total of $295 million, a situation that affects the humanitarian response.

K. Economic situation

57. MONUSCO documented a downward macroeconomic trend owing to a decrease in commodity prices, resulting in a scarcity of financial resources, which is particularly felt at the provincial level. Civil servants from South Kivu province had not received their salaries in eight months, whereas a 50 per cent reduction in wages was announced in Kongo Central on 24 August. Financial problems also prevented the inauguration of the government in Tshopo. The Congolese franc continued to depreciate by roughly 0.7 per cent in July, with signs of stabilization observed as at 8 August. Projections of annual inflation rates were estimated at 3.2 per cent, against a target of 4.2 per cent. The steepest increase in prices was reported in telecommunications.

L. Regional developments

58. The President pursued efforts to maintain and improve diplomatic ties at the regional level. He met with his Ugandan and Rwandan counterparts on 4 and 12 August, respectively, to reinforce bilateral cooperation, including with regard to the fight against the Allied Democratic Forces and the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda, and expedite the repatriation of former Mouvement du 23 mars combatants.

59. My Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and representatives of the National Oversight Mechanism pursued efforts to advance the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. Particular emphasis was placed on addressing the delayed repatriation of former Mouvement du 23 mars elements, empowering women to effectively participate in the implementation of the Framework and strengthening regional ties to facilitate the national dialogue and the neutralization of armed groups.

60. On 27 June, the National Oversight Mechanism organized a technical assessment meeting, in the presence of a Mouvement du 23 mars delegation, to harmonize views on the release of the group's prisoners, including the list of those subject to amnesty, and discuss preliminary steps for developing a timeline for the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. On 14 July, the coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism, François Muamba, resigned and the deputy coordinator, Léon Engulu, replaced him.

61. On 20 July, ministers of defence of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region convened in Nairobi to review progress and identify challenges relating to the neutralization of negatives forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region and reinforce their common strategy to address illegal cross-border trade by armed groups. On 1 and 2 September, defence ministers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda met in Kampala, under the auspices of the secretariat of the International Conference, to formulate a joint follow-up mechanism to address the threat posed by the Allied Democratic Forces.

III. Deployment of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and implementation of its mandate

A. Strategic dialogue and development of an exit strategy for the Mission

62. MONUSCO continued to work with the Government to advance the development of a conditions-based approach to the eventual drawdown and exit of the Mission. The development of a one-year technical agreement on cooperation between the Mission and FARDC contributed to strengthening the planning and conduct of coordinated military operations with MONUSCO support in accordance with the human rights due diligence policy. Progress has also been made in the development of joint programming between the Mission and the United Nations country team, which is a core component of the United Nations transition plan in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

B. Transformation of the force

63. Progress was made in relation to the redeployment of the force in North Kivu to better respond to threats posed by armed groups and efficiently protect civilians, including through the establishment of a reserve capability in Goma and the redeployment of the Force Intervention Brigade from Lubero and Miriki to the Beni area. Capability deployment continues to be pursued through preparations for the establishment of rapidly deployable battalions located in North Kivu and South Kivu. Although part of the equipment for the first rapidly deployable battalion is still pending delivery, some elements were positioned in Bijombo, South Kivu, for a two-week period, in response to inter-ethnic tensions between the Bafuliro and Banyamulenge ethnic groups. Planning continues for the induction of the second rapidly deployable battalion in February 2017, and a review will be conducted before the end of 2016. The force continued preparations for a phased transformation of military engineering companies to achieve greater effectiveness through a leaner structure with integral force protection capability.

C. Preparations for the elections

64. MONUSCO continued to reinforce its monitoring and reporting capacity on human rights violations and restrictions on political space throughout the reporting period, while improving overall preparedness to prevent, mitigate and appropriately respond to elections-related violence. The Mission focused its efforts on prevention, prioritizing such efforts as providing support to political processes and promoting an environment that contributes to a peaceful and credible electoral process.

65. In that regard, my Special Representative and my Special Envoy continued to use their good offices to promote dialogue among all stakeholders, which remains the most important avenue for reducing the likelihood of violence and political instability in the coming months. The Mission's advocacy efforts for the respect of

constitutional rights, fundamental freedoms and human rights targeted local and provincial government actors, security forces and civil society, including key women's and youth groups. The Mission pursued efforts to establish mobile civilian monitoring and reporting teams in Kinshasa, Goma and Lubumbashi that would be available to deploy on short notice to areas deemed to be at a high risk of electoral violence and those areas that have no MONUSCO footprint.

66. The Mission continued to strengthen the capacity of the national police in managing public order without resorting to lethal force and raise awareness of the importance of respect for human and constitutional rights. MONUSCO provided support to a sensitization programme launched on 1 July on the role of the Inspectorate General of the national police, which is expected to monitor crowd control units during the electoral period. As a result of MONUSCO advocacy, the Government issued a ministerial order prohibiting the use of lethal weapons in the context of managing public order.

67. The Mission continued to update its contingency plans for responding to deteriorating situations, within available resources, while factoring in deployment limitations and its insufficient presence in western Democratic Republic of the Congo. MONUSCO plans include moving civilian and uniformed personnel and assets to hotspots as required, within existing resources, while bearing in mind the impact on the delivery of mandated tasks and operations. MONUSCO also updated its risk analysis for elections-related violence.

IV. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

68. MONUSCO assessed that its support to FARDC-led operations against armed groups did not lead to any significant increases in threats to United Nations personnel and installations. Forty-eight significant security-related incidents were reported involving United Nations personnel in the country, of which 16 were hazard and safety-related. On 8 July, one MONUSCO staff member was abducted near Katweguru in Rutshuru territory and held for 12 days in poor conditions before being released.

V. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

69. MONUSCO continued to implement robust preventive and enforcement actions to address sexual exploitation and abuse among its personnel. Prevention activities focused on raising awareness of my policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse among Mission personnel and local communities through effective training and sensitization. Around 3,000 members of high-risk communities in Bukavu, Bunia, Goma, Mavivi and Uvira were sensitized on the adverse impact of sexual exploitation and abuse. MONUSCO conducted 15 risk assessments, 35 training sessions for new personnel, seven outreach activities of the community-based complaint networks in Bukavu, Bunia, Goma, Sake and Uvira, and two workshops in Goma and Kinshasa for uniformed personnel.

VI. Observations

70. I am deeply concerned about the impasse in the electoral process, rising political tensions and related incidents. I condemn in the strongest terms the violence that marred demonstrations staged by the opposition on 19 and 20 September and resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of property. I reiterate my call for all political leaders and their supporters to refrain from any further violence that could exacerbate the situation. I call upon the Congolese authorities to exercise restraint in their response to protests and to abide by the principles of necessity and proportionality. Perpetrators or instigators of violence will need to answer for their actions. I urge all political leaders to address their differences peacefully and through dialogue, in line with Security Council resolution 2277 (2016). In that regard, I commend the steps taken by the Government, the African Union Facilitator of the national dialogue and other international partners to help unblock the process. I welcome the presidential pardon and subsequent ministerial decisions on the release of a number of civil society activists, human rights defenders and political figures and reopen two media outlets affiliated with the opposition and the engagement of the President with citizen activists. I urge the Government to adopt further confidence-building measures aimed at creating conditions conducive to continued dialogue.

71. Dialogue should be a continuous process. A sustained dialogue involving all major political stakeholders that put the interests of the nation and its people first remains the only means for reaching the necessary consensus to allow for credible elections to be held and would avoid the escalation of tensions and violence. I urge the political groups who have not yet joined the process to play a constructive role that contributes to the holding of timely and credible elections.

72. It is the primary responsibility of the Government and all concerned stakeholders to maintain peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and preserve the hard-won gains made in recent years. The Congolese people have suffered enough. MONUSCO has continued to develop and regularly review contingency plans for addressing potential political and security risks linked to the electoral process, however, a major deterioration in the situation would require a response that is beyond the capacity of the Mission. I call upon the Government, political leaders across the spectrum and concerned international and regional partners to ensure that the increasingly tense political situation in the country is managed through peaceful means and dialogue. Dealing with the consequences of a major political crisis and the suffering that this would inflict upon the civilian population would be far more costly than prompt and decisive preventive action, while there is still time to come to a compromise, find solutions and avoid violence. It is essential that all political leaders show a sense of responsibility. The United Nations stands ready to support such efforts and my Special Representative will continue to engage with all stakeholders in that regard.

73. I am profoundly concerned about reports of increasing violations of fundamental civil and political rights by State actors. They include violations of freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly — rights anchored in the binding international treaties to which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is party and enshrined in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Respect for the human

rights of all people is at the core of any inclusive, credible dialogue. People must be able to express their views and work together without fear of retribution by the security forces or judicial authorities. I encourage the Government to continue bringing perpetrators of human rights violations to justice, in line with its commitment to end impunity.

74. I am also concerned about the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in North Kivu where urgent action is needed to avoid further deterioration. I condemn the brutal killings perpetrated in the Beni area by suspected Allied Democratic Forces elements. Such continued attacks on civilians, FARDC and MONUSCO are reprehensible and have devastating consequences for the civilian population. It is therefore imperative that the national authorities take robust political action and deploy the security forces in a determined effort to address the threat posed by armed groups. I welcome the engagement and efforts of the President and senior government officials to foster closer cooperation with the Ugandan and Rwandan authorities in addressing the threat posed by some armed groups. I am encouraged by the improved cooperation between FARDC and MONUSCO in that area.

75. The process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration remains at the heart of peacekeeping efforts, not only in bringing stability to areas affected by conflict, but in addressing the threat posed by armed groups. More needs to be done to provide former combatants with alternative livelihoods and prevent them from taking up weapons again. To that end, I encourage closer cooperation between the Government, MONUSCO and the World Bank to ensure the smooth transition of former combatants from the reinsertion camps at Kamina and Kitona to the reintegration phase. I call upon the Government to take additional steps to minimize the risk of further violence in the camps and in the communities to which former combatants are returning.

76. I am grateful to my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo for his leadership in implementing the Mission's mandate. I also wish to extend my appreciation to all staff members of MONUSCO and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system for their commitment to promoting peace and stability in the country. I am appreciative of the work of all troop- and police-contributing countries, bilateral partners and other international and regional partners, which continue to provide invaluable support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

MONUSCO
September 2016
MONUSCO Headquarters
Force Forward Headquarters
Brigade Headquarters
Sector Headquarters
Formed Police Unit
Logistics base
Military Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
SOUTH SUDAN
UGANDA
RWANDA
BURUNDI
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MALAWI
ZAMBIA
ANGOLA
CONGO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Bangui
Goma
Bukavu
Kisangani
Kindu
Lubumbashi
Kolwezi
Kananga
Kalemie
Uvira
Bujumbura
Kigali
Kampala
Entebbe
Dar Es Salaam
Lake Malawi
Lake Tanganyika
Lake Kivu
Lake Albert
Lake Edward
Lake Victoria
Lake Mweru
Lake Bangweulu
Malawi
Kinshasa
Matadi
Boma
Tshikapa
Kamina
Kasongo Lunda
Mbanza Congo
Cabinda
Pointe Noire
Brazzaville
Impfondo
Zemio
Obo
Nzara
Yambio
Juba
Malakal
Bentiu
Wau
Aweil
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Kasama
Mpulungu
Chipata
Lilongwe
Blantyre
Mzuzu
Nkhotakota
Salima
Monkey Bay
Karonga
Chitipa
Mbeya
Tunduma
Sumbawanga
Kigoma
Ujiji
Kabalo
Kongolo
Lubao
Kalima
Kabambare
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